

THE
GREAT OBSTRUCTION
TO THE
CONVERSION OF SOULS
AT HOME AND ABROAD.

AN ADDRESS,

BY REV. THOMAS LAFON, M.D.,
LATE A MISSIONARY OF THE AMERICAN BOARD AT THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

Sept. 28

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY THE UNION MISSIONARY SOCIETY.
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THE following Address was delivered by Dr. LAFON, at Brooklyn, N. Y., September 28th, 1843, at the request of a committee, by whom a copy was solicited for publication. Dr. L. is a native of Virginia, and has resided in Kentucky and Missouri. He inherited a number of slaves, and has also trafficked in them. After his conversion, his attention was drawn to the anti-slavery question by the publications issued in the Northern States, and he was led to examine the subject in the light of the Scriptures. He soon saw the sinfulness of the system, and emancipated his slaves upon the soil. Subsequently he offered himself to the A. B. C. F. M., and went, in their service, to the Sandwich Islands in 1836, where he remained for five years and a half, and then disconnected himself from the Board, among other reasons, because of their receiving the wages of slave-labor, "without reproof or rebuke." In the Address he presents his views with regard to the great obstruction to the conversion of souls. Shall not such a man be heard, and his arguments weighed, by the Christian community?

THE

GREAT OBSTRUCTION.

THREE quarters of the human family are still heathen. This implies that they are in ignorance of the true God and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The term is very general, and it will be readily perceived, that not only a great variety of individual character is likely to be embraced under it, but subdivisions may be made, according to circumstances and influences which are brought to operate upon them. There are three classes into which all heathen character may be ranked, and for the sake of convenience in studying it, and adapting appropriate remedies for its removal, may be termed,

I. The heathenism of Idolatry.

II. The heathenism of Oppression.

III. That which is of a mixed character, partaking of the nature of both.

I. The heathenism of Idolatry consists in the erroneous belief of lords many and gods many. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful," but "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, &c." With such an error to begin with, on a subject to which most of mankind attach great importance, the mind very naturally runs on to extravagancies and absurdities in the performance of the various

rites which misguided reason suggests, as necessary to propitiate the favor, avert the wrath, or secure the assistance of its deities. The power which gods are supposed to possess, and which they are thought to exert, over man and his concerns, is a constant stimulus to the mind to offer up to them gifts and honors, to seek for that favor which those possessing great power alone can bestow, and to avert such injuries as, it is apprehended, an offended Deity can inflict. For such worshippers think, that their gods are, in character, altogether such as they are themselves. Hence it is supposed, the more costly the sacrifice offered, the greater the favor to be obtained. This is the kind of heathenism which the Apostle Paul found at Athens, and which induced him to say to his auditors, "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious." But they were philosophers who encountered the Apostle at Athens, notwithstanding they were heathen idolators. And the fact is too generally known to require substantiating, that Greece, as a nation, in the midst of its idolatry was remarkable for its science, learning, and knowledge of the arts. Nor does Greece afford a solitary instance of idolators being eminent for their mental power, and high attainments in literature and knowledge. Egypt, which existed long before, had made attainments in the arts which probably will never be surpassed. Rome affords another example of the grossest idolatry co-existing and flourishing with high demonstrations of vigorous mind. It is no doubt true that a large proportion of her citizens were mentally degraded, and probably almost all were debased in other respects; but, that idolatry, which prevailed in all the countries alluded to, has not a very strong tendency to produce mental imbecility is evident from the fact, that a large number who lived and died idolators in each of the countries specified, were among the most eminent of the race for powers of mind.

II. The heathenism of Oppression is of a very different character from that described above; and idolatrous views, though they may exist, do not form the principal feature of it. The leading characteristic of this kind of heathenism consists in imbecility of mind, something analogous to an annihilation of the mental faculties. Examples of this kind of heathenism are afforded in the population of the Sandwich Islands, and in that of every country where the

absurd than the faith from which it springs. Such ceremonies, at best, are irreverent and worthless, and not unfrequently abominable cruelties are connected with them. In addition to the object of propitiating the favor and of averting the wrath of its deities, the institution of idolatry is frequently sustained and perpetuated, with some ulterior temporal view. It is an instrument in the hands of one part of a community, by which they keep in awe and control the operations and the persons of another part. It is exceedingly degrading to the human heart. Few, if any vices are forbidden by it; almost all are systematized and cherished. It is, as it were, a wall reaching to heaven, and not only obscuring that view of God which the light of nature is ready to pour into every mind, but substituting in *His* stead, and pre-occupying the whole mind, with the notion of false deities. The human family, so far as they are under such a system, must be acknowledged to be without God and without hope. So far as it extends, it is a darkness over the earth, and a gross darkness over the minds of the people.

The second great and widely operative form of heathenism is,

Oppression.—By this is meant, the taking away, to a greater or less extent, such rights as are natural and proper to be possessed by all. As was remarked while speaking of the different kinds of heathenism, the world presents us with a very marked difference in character among heathen people. Since we believe that the nations of the earth are made of one blood, we cannot attribute to one and the same general cause, points of character differing so widely as those which are found among the different classes of heathen. The contrast has been made between some heathen who enjoy rights, and the Sandwich Islanders who enjoy none. As far as any thing can be settled by human observation, the childish imbecility and degradation of intellect in the Sandwich Islander, is neither natural to him, nor attributable to idolatry. It is ascertained not to be a natural deficiency. If idolatry is particularly adapted to produce an overthrow of the powers of mind, then the Athenians should have been feeble minded who were wholly given to idolatry, and the Sandwich Islanders vigorous in intellect, who for many years have not been idolators at all. We need something

that commends itself more to our reason, as a cause for mental imbecility where we find it to exist in an adult population, who were sprightly in childhood. To say that such imbecility is attributable to idolatry, is as untrue as it is unphilosophical. To settle satisfactorily to our own minds what the cause is which produces such a state of intellect, we have only to look at one of the plain laws of our nature which is common to both body and mind. And this law simply is, that exercise is indispensably necessary to the developement and perfection of the organs and faculties, both of the one and the other. Let an infant be confined to the recumbent posture until it is thirty years old, and it will be as unable to walk as it was the day it was confined. Let one arm of a thrifty youth be suspended in a sling during the period of his growth, and while the other parts of the system will be found to have attained the ordinary size and strength, this will be found to have remained almost stationary, and no subsequent exercise will ever give it the form and power of its fellow. This is perfectly well understood, and abundantly illustrated in the common occurrences of life. The same thing is true in regard to the faculties of the mind. If they are exercised, they expand and acquire strength. If they lie dormant, they remain in childish imbecility and prematurely decay.

But the question occurs, do the faculties of mind, so elastic, so ready to operate at our bidding, lie habitually dormant in the case of any individual or of any nation? And the reply is, that this state of mind was characteristic of the Sandwich Islanders as a nation, and is still so to a great extent of them, and of many other degraded heathen people. Now what is the reason of this? For a solution of this problem we are constrained to recur to some of the first principles of our nature. A state of rest, or inactivity of body and mind, is said to be natural and congenial to our feelings and dispositions. Any action of either except as it is drawn forth by the stimulus of inducement, is thought by most persons to be fitful and directed to no profitable end. However this may be, it is certainly the arrangement of providence that mental exertion shall be called forth by such inducement as he has set before the mind. In the very dawn of life our wants press upon us, and they increase

right of property is denied. It may surprise some that this should be said to be the heathenism of the Sandwich Island nation. But the following considerations should be borne in mind.

1. Idolatry has not existed at the Sandwich Islands, as a national institution, for twenty-five years. There have been but partial and occasional returns to it within that period. 2. Idol worship was voluntarily abandoned before the gospel was preached there, or any Missionary had reached those shores. Idolatry then, has not only ceased in a great degree to exercise influence over the minds of that people since its downfall, but it probably had ceased to do so for some time before, as such an institution is likely to have lost the respect it once enjoyed in a very gradual manner. 3. The right of property among the common people, was never known there till very recently.

In this kind of heathenism there is, in the adult population, and specially in those somewhat advanced in age, a listlessness and inability to confine the attention continuously to one subject, manifest to those who are acquainted with their habits of thought. There is a premature fading away of some of the faculties of the mind, and an enervated condition of all, which at once indisposes and disqualifies them for vigorous mental effort. They are unable to follow a speaker in a plain discourse of fifteen minutes. And whether they sleep under a sermon, or give a vacant staring attention, they are unable at its close, to do more than relate some detached statements which the speaker has made. As a general rule, (and it is a very general one,) this is all that the class of people referred to can do, until an intellect is revived, as it were, within them. A very reasonable inquiry for the Missionary to make on this subject is, whether this is a natural and national imbecility of mind which characterizes the people among whom he is laboring. To solve it, he turns his attention to the children, and in the case of the Sandwich Islanders, he finds the teachers with one united voice declare, that their pupils learn all the branches of common school instruction as readily as do children in the United States. He is at once satisfied from his own observation, and the universal testimony of others, that the evil alluded to is owing to some

cause which has supervened between the period of childhood, and that of mature age.

In searching out all the symptoms of the spiritual disease which the Missionary feels himself called upon to remedy he next turns his attention to the heart of his patient. And whether in contact with the heathenism of idolatry or of oppression, he expects beforehand to find *that* a cage of unclean birds. Still, it is necessary for him to know particulars, as there is a very striking and important difference in mind between the idolator and one who has enjoyed no rights. The Apostle says, that "when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." Paul, by the term "Gentiles," may be supposed to mean here not *all* heathen, but only a certain *class* of them. If this be so, from these words of the Apostle, as well as from other circumstances, it is perhaps not too much to infer, that in the heathenism of idolatry, conscience may be, to some extent, in a sound and vigorous state. In the heathenism under consideration, it is matter of experience that it is not so. Other differences might be mentioned, but they are less prominent and less important. Individuals or even nations may show marks of both kinds of heathenism, and the one or the other will prevail, as the one or the other cause producing them has the predominance. No nation perhaps, affords a more striking illustration of this fact than India. The different castes which exist there and their difference of character, it is believed, clearly exemplify all the distinctions made.

But to examine the forms of heathenism more narrowly.

Idolatry.—This system consists in materializing the Deity who is a spirit, and of fashioning him into images according to a corrupt and perverted fancy. Of multiplying Him who is the *One* only and true God, into as many as there are affections in the heart to desire, or ideas in the mind to conceive. Belief in such a number, and in such character as is ascribed to these deities, leads to the performance of religious ceremonies not less

and multiply, as our being unfolds and our conceptions are enlarged. Wants real and fanciful, natural and artificial, mental and bodily, to an enormous extent and in great variety, urge us to activity where there is hope of success. God has every where filled the world with objects of desire, of gratification and of value, to meet the wants which are common to the race. But these objects, though within the reach of mental and bodily exertion, are not to be acquired without the faithful exercise of both. To obtain an object we must exert ourselves, and to enjoy or to use, we must possess it. But the possession implies right. Now suppose an individual to be so unfortunate as to live under a system which allows him not the right of property; then, evidently, he cannot gratify his wants by the use of property. He cannot appropriate to his use, that which he may not acquire and hold. But it is by the use and possession of property alone, that any demand which our natures make upon the world around, can be answered. In the case of the Sandwich Islanders, they had lived from time immemorial up to the year 1839, the property of their kings and chiefs. They knew not any right to any species of property, except what was granted to them by their owners. This extended formerly to what was indispensable to life. After the mission had printed books, they were permitted to possess *them*. What would be the natural course of an individual, born and reared up under such authority? In infancy, he has a healthy vigorous infant's intellect. As he advances in life, his wants may stimulate him to form some simple plan by which he may acquire a wished-for object. He may cultivate a melon or raise a fowl. But when they are ready for market his master seizes upon them and forces them from him. After repeating the experiment a few times and seeing all around him in the same wretched state with himself, he yields in despair to his lot. His mind lapses down into a state of entire quiescence. At twenty years of age he has scarcely advanced perceptibly from what he was at ten. At forty his faculties begin to fade, and beyond fifty, he scarcely has an idea above that of an oyster. What labor it must necessarily be, to reclaim a nation from such degradation! An intellect to redeem from its ruins, a conscience to awaken, and the lowest animal indulgences to correct, where even a manifestation of shame does not

indicate to you that the force of the truth you may have used against their vicious practices, has been felt. While then it is conceded that idolatry is the prime cause of superstitious heathenism, oppression, the taking away of man's rights, is the principal cause of that degradation of mind which is found among heathen adults who when in childhood were not deficient in that respect.

III. A combination of these states will of course exhibit heathenism of a mixed character, partaking of the nature of the two kinds described above. Other causes of heathenism than idolatry and oppression may exist; but most heathen nations are under one or the other or both of these, and where they exist they exercise a controlling influence over every thing else. Of these, oppression is far the most destructive in its effects. In idolatry there is ignorance of the true God. Under oppression there is ignorance of almost every thing. In idolatry there is delusion and darkness. In oppression there is mental paralysis and death. Idolatry leads the mind away from God. Oppression tends to destroy its power to move in any way. Idolatry leads its votaries by seductive temptations and false hopes. Oppression binds its subjects by the iron hand of force.

But another of the legitimate fruits of oppression, is, as near an approach towards a paralysis of conscience as of the intellect. When forced into the perpetration of crime there is in human nature a disposition to throw off personal responsibility. Let any one be compelled to violate, habitually, the sanctity of the Sabbath day, and he will soon do so when not compelled, with little compunction of conscience. Vices are cherished, and acquire giant size, under oppression, and come to be regarded as virtues. The subjects of it, when not compelled into a course of crime, are under strong and perpetual temptation to it. Charge such an individual whom you may wish to reclaim, with the practice of the vice of hypocrisy or deception, and he will probably tell you, that you may live without lying, but he cannot. Through that means alone has he obtained the enjoyment of any of his own rights. He has toiled for years under a task master, without reward, and nothing but deception has procured for him any respite. Conscience, which under other circumstances might have reproved him for prevarication, has

now lost its power over him, and he esteems that a virtue which you charge upon him as a crime. Such a being, degraded as near into the likeness of a brute as human nature can be made to approach it, will of course indulge in the lowest animal excesses, for pleasure of other kinds are not within his reach, and conscience being well nigh paralyzed he cannot be made to feel the force of restraining influences. Now when intellect is crushed, and conscience paralyzed, and shame is lost, which implies the loss of all virtue, we have a faint picture of what oppression can accomplish.

EXTENT, &c., OF THE HEATHENISM OF OPPRESSION.

Oppression is almost as common as idolatry, and far more efficient in crushing the minds and hearts of those who are under its influence. The mental elevation of nations may be measured by the degree of freedom which they enjoy. Take the Chinese nation for example. In that empire are more than a third of the inhabitants of the world. They are called a semi-barbarous people. They enjoy not the rights of ancient Roman citizens, of Englishmen, or of white Americans. They do not give such manifestations of intellect; but they enjoy some rights, incomparably more than the Sandwich Islanders formerly did, or than do the slave population of the United States. They excel both of these in their mental manifestations. They have some general literature, as well as mechanics, merchants, navigators, &c. They are far inferior, however, in all these, to the freer nations to which they have been compared, while they are as much in advance of those who have enjoyed no rights at all. The Washington group of islands in the Pacific, with a population evidently from the same stock with the Sandwich Islanders, are inhabited by comparatively a free people. They are said to be far more sagacious than the Sandwich Islanders. It is not pretended that every free man, or every free nation, will rise very high in mental manifestations—other circumstances than oppression may prevent this; but it is believed that little is hazarded in the assertion, that any people must sink down mentally under oppression, and if exceptions exist, as it is acknowledged they do, they are to be regarded as exceptions to a general rule. India is a country of many

millions of inhabitants, and its history ought to afford us profitable instruction. The lower castes of that nation are exceedingly degraded. They enjoy no right of property except where the English government is extended. There is some literature and intelligence among the Brahmins and higher castes, who enjoy more rights. Other missionaries, besides Schwartz, labored faithfully and successfully in India during the last century. But a more circumstantial account of the gospel in *his* hands has reached us, and we will therefore speak more particularly of that. So highly qualified, and so successful a missionary was Schwartz considered, that he has obtained the appellation of the modern Apostle. With unusual powers of body and mind, with great energy of character, and his labors protracted to the extent of forty-six years, the world has expected great results from his efforts. The immediate results were very considerable. Very many of the inhabitants were converted, or at least professed to be so, but long since almost every trace of his labors has disappeared. Why is this so? If the converts were under no ruinous disabilities, why should not many of them, who might have grown up under the pupilage of such a teacher, in their turn have become instructors of others, ministers of the New Testament, to carry forward and perpetuate the work which he began? Had they enjoyed a moderate share of freedom, had their minds been left untrammelled, and with the common inducements to draw them into action, it can hardly be supposed that the light of the gospel would so soon have been extinguished at Trichinopoly and elsewhere where the missionary labored.* We know that the Rajahs were exceedingly despotic and oppressive, and probably never became the less so for all the missionary's labors, for he enjoyed the full confidence of the government, and they did not hesitate to manifest that confidence by saying, "the Padre has no design of interfering with our government." Now, without going into the question, how far the preaching of the whole gospel interferes with those wicked rulers, and individuals

* The manner in which piety has died and is continually dying out at the South, is another illustration equally in point, but space does not allow of any enlargement upon it here. It may be made a subject of a distinct tract illustrative of the principle.

who usurp the rights of one part of the community and appropriate them to their own aggrandizement, it may safely be said, that among any people where rights are not regarded, if it be necessary that the gospel be perpetuated among them, the necessity of continuing to send it to them will never cease. A people who enjoy not the right of property, and who do not possess personal freedom, can never sustain the gospel ministry. The world never has witnessed and it never can witness such a scene, and for several very plain reasons. 1. The degradation of mind is too great. Rightly, or profitably, or safely, to divide the word of truth, requires more mind than can exist in a people who are degraded as nearly as possible to the condition of brutes. 2. It cannot be done on account of their poverty and degradation. To support the indispensably necessary institutions for keeping alive the gospel ministry in any community, requires the right of property, and the enjoyment of personal freedom.

We have seen that, in India, after nearly half a century's missionary labor, the existence of the truth scarcely survived him who proclaimed it. The probability is, that when his own immediate converts died, the light of the gospel was buried with them. The heavy waves of oppression which bore them down, made it necessary that a helping hand should be constantly extended to their own support. How could they be expected to extend the necessary help to others?

The Sandwich Islanders, for a number of years, have had the entire Bible in their own language, half the people are able to read it, twenty thousand of them are hopeful converts, churches and school-houses are numerous among them, the printing-press, book-binding, and other facilities are in successful operation, and yet, notwithstanding the mission has been established there twenty-three years, the forty missionary families now on the ground require reinforcement after re-inforcement to go to their aid. No one will be surprised that they should continue to require help, who has a correct idea of the state of mind and heart, into which a system of oppression will plunge a people. And had the yoke, which bore them down, not been broken (which happily was accomplished in part in 1839), the necessity of continuing to send

missionaries there would not have ceased as long as it might be necessary to continue the gospel among them, even if it should be twenty-three hundred, instead of twenty-three years.

The change, in the Sandwich Island government, to which allusion has been made, relieved the inhabitants from the state of entire ownership to the King and chiefs. The government, from being an entire despotism, became a limited monarchy. A constitution was formed, setting forth the character the government should henceforward assume, and defining the limits of its several departments. Laws were made and published, the right of property was recognized, and a representative branch was added to the legislative department.

The oppression that still exists there forbids the idea of any very rapid rise in character, intelligence or property, among the people, although the present state is regarded as incalculably better than the old order of things. Every foot of the soil on the islands, is still claimed and held exclusively by the King and chiefs. The demand which is now made upon the people for work by law, amounts virtually, though it does not nominally, to about one-half of their time. When a man gives one-half of his time to serve his government or owners, and has to rent his land, build or repair his house, support his family, without a dollar's worth of property in tools, or other conveniences to begin with, and his old habits of indolence pressing upon him, he will hardly be supposed to grow rich rapidly.

While the missionary is endeavoring to correct the ruin into which oppression has plunged his fellow man, and to raise him up to the station from which inhumanity, armed with power, has driven him, how must his heart sink within him when he reflects that the same oppression which it is costing so much to remedy, exists in his own country, and in the very church under whose patronage he is laboring. The same causes are true to the production of like effects. He knows that oppression, perfect and universal, in the United States, is exercised over twenty-five times the number of the whole population of the Sandwich Island nation. He knows that heathenish degradation, in all its terrible and revolting forms, must necessarily exist wherever man is made a slave. If he

were at liberty to doubt on this subject, he has only to read the proceedings of churches which make provision, that if husbands are separated to an inconvenient distance from their wives they may marry again.* And the declaration of ecclesiastical bodies, who hesitate not to assert, that the slaves “may justly be considered the heathen of this christian country, and will bear comparison with heathen in any country in the world.”† While the missionary knows that the Church which sent him forth to endeavor to reclaim a part of the race from heathenish degradation, fellowships those who keep a portion of their own countrymen in heathenism, and is engaged in perpetuating and sustaining substantially the same kind of heathenism at home, what confidence can he have in her prayers for his success? How much will the prayers of *the Church*, under such circumstances, avail in carrying forward a great reformation abroad? Can the missionary feel his heart encouraged, and his hands strengthened, while he reflects upon this strange inconsistency and ruinous corruption in the Church? Men made heathen by the Church, and the avails of their unrequited toils sent abroad to sustain missionaries, who are enabled to reclaim a few from the same condition! God is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever; and it is certain, that there was a time when He said, “I hate robbery for burnt-offering.” Whence did the Jewish Sanhedrim derive the impression that it was not lawful to put the price of blood into the treasury of the Lord? If a valid objection exists against an offering of any description, can the unrequited toil of slave-labor be acceptable?

* “Baptist Associations in the slave States have decided that a female slave, a member of a church, and having lived with a slave as her husband, when sold and removed to another plantation, might cohabit with another man without being subject to the church discipline for adultery.”—*Monthly Patriot*, Vol. I., No. 3.

† In an official report of the Presbyterian Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, embracing all the ministers and lay representatives from all the churches of that denomination in those two States, adopted at its session in Columbia, S. C., and published by order of the Synod, in the *Charleston Observer* of March 22, 1834, it is stated, in addition to the extract above—

“Who would credit it, that in these years of revival and benevolent effort, in this Christian Republic, there are over *two millions* of *human beings*, in the condition of HEATHEN, and, in some respects, *in a worse condition*?”

Slaves are bred and owned, bought and sold, and whipped and driven, and hired and bartered, and the gains unblushingly offered, because willingly received, as a contribution to carry forward the work of a just and holy God! Nay more, as if to carry the absurdity to the greatest possible extreme, professing Christians are seen carrying on these strange operations, and professing Christians are among those who endure this unnatural and inhuman oppression. In a mere mercantile point of view, what could possibly be gained by oppressing, degrading and heathenizing a part of our race at home, to obtain the means to send the gospel to reclaim others from that condition abroad? In that view, we must for ever be the losers, for it is easy to degrade and ruin a man, while it is difficult to reclaim and raise him up. Besides, we labor to an immense disadvantage in this work abroad. So far as outward ministrations are necessary to conversion, a great distance must be traveled, a strange language learned, and many other disadvantages encountered and overcome, before we can even commence the work of reclaiming any. We cannot be surprised, as long as we labor in this way, to see an overwhelming balance on the wrong side of the ledger. But we have no right to conduct missionary operations upon such principles. If we acknowledge that we owe the heathen the gospel—if like the Apostle, we are debtors to the Greeks and to the barbarians, to the wise and the unwise—we should indeed pay the debt, but not by robbing and reducing others to heathenism, or perpetuating the condition of those already so, in order to raise the funds to do it. The only plausible apology which can be made for such a course of ruinous inconsistency, is that it may have been done ignorantly, in unbelief. And if, in indulgent mercy, God has kindly winked at the times of this ignorance, he certainly does not now do less than command all Christians everywhere to repent. Some of the warmest supporters of our old missionary organizations, say unequivocally that they are receiving habitually, into their treasuries, the price of blood. What an admission is this, for those to make, who still continue to co-operate with such a system!

But it may be said, that it is only a part of the Church which is engaged in enlarging and upholding the institution of heathenism

at home, and that the amount that they contribute for missionary purposes is not large. In regard to the amount contributed by slaveholders, while it is admitted to be small, all the objection exists against receiving it that would if it were large. If there is valid objection to receiving a great amount in this way, it must also lie against a small sum. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. And although every part of the Church is not immediately engaged in this iniquity, yet that which is not bears witness to the fact, that there has been almost no voice of remonstrance heard against it in any part of the land. But indirectly, and powerfully, almost the whole Church, north as well as south, is lending its support to the institution of heathenism at home. Missionary Boards are organizations, made up from the churches, for greater convenience in carrying forward missionary work. The principal of these are composed, in part, of men who are themselves personally, according to the admission of their own officers, slaveholders! They are systematically, and habitually engaged day by day, in reducing men to a state of low heathenish degradation here, and their business as members of these Boards, is to direct the operation of redeeming mankind from that condition abroad. Their names are published in the annual proceedings of these religious organizations, and heralded through the length and breadth of the land, thus showing in a public manner their connection with the institution of slavery, and in that way sustaining it. Year by year new additions are made to the Boards, of ministers settled over slaveholding congregations and of those at the north who are known to oppose all efforts for the abolition of slavery. In addition to this, they receive into their treasuries the bloody offerings from the unpaid toil of slaves, and that without rebuking the donors. It is not enough to say, as the American Board has repeatedly said, "Slavery is an evil, and it can sustain no relation to it which implies approbation," while they do actually sustain such a relation. While a part of their members are slaveholders, and their receiving agents are stationed through a considerable portion of the southern country, transmitting funds from slaveholding congregations, and no objection uttered against it, does not such a relation exist, as must go to sustain slavery? Would it imply no approbation of card-playing, if notorious

gamblers were retained as members of that body, entitled to sit in council, deliberate and vote with them, join with them in all the privileges of the sanctuary, and have an agent stationed at the corner of the table to receive a part of their winnings, whenever they were successful players? Would intemperance find no support, in having members of our missionary Boards as notorious for making, vending, and drinking alcohol, as some of them are for holding slaves?

Idolatry is one form of heathenism, oppression another.

If our great missionary organizations were composed in part of idolators, and of those ministers, who preach the gospel from year to year to church-members who are idolators, would there be in this no connection with that system which implies approbation? Yet, precisely such a connection exists between our old missionary Boards and the system of slavery, which is oppression perfected; and yet it is said this implies no approbation of the latter system.

As this subject has been long agitated before our Missionary Boards, and all hope of their taking further action is for the present at an end—since it is said that the measured and ambiguous sentence referred to above is their ultimatum on the subject—it may not be improper to state what it is thought reasonable they should do. If drunkards, or gamblers, or adulterers were known to be among their number, we should suppose it reasonable that they should be voted out, or if that cannot be done, that the world should know that the only reason is that it is impossible to do it. So, if slaveholders make a part of their number, let them be disposed of in the same way, and for the same reasons. In relation to receiving the unrequited toil of slaves into the Lord's treasury, much pains have been taken to show that the Boards cannot discriminate between funds from slave-holders and non-slave-holders. This implies that they would make a distinction if they could. But since it cannot be done, can it be unreasonable to ask that they should say that they regard the proceeds of slave labor as an improper offering to the Lord's treasury, and that such is not desired? No one ever wished or expected them to do that which is impossible. If such contributions are not desired, it is not improper to say so; but if they are, that reason accounts for the difficulty in obtaining such an

expression. Slave-holders would relieve them of the necessity of discriminating, if they would publish, that they believe slave-holding to be a heinous sin against God, and that they wished no such contributions sent to them.

The rapidity of the increase of heathenism in our own land, and its overwhelming preponderance over the number reclaimed by our missionaries abroad, ought to strike every Christian who hopes for the universal spread of the Gospel with alarm, if not with consternation. It is agreed that an immense amount of labor has been performed by the missionaries of the three principal Boards of this country, *i. e.* the American, the Baptist, and Methodist Boards, since their organization, which is now about thirty years. But the results of the united labors of all of them, so far as conversions are concerned, is less than forty thousand.* The increase of the slave population in the United States during the same period is a million and a half! These Boards have christianized, according to their own reports, but little more than a thousand a year since their organization, while the heathen population in our midst have multiplied at the rate of fifty times that number. One generation has passed since we commenced our missionary labors, and these are the results that are before us. We now commence another period of the same length, and what are the prospects which these two institutions hold up to our view, provided they continue their operations as they have done hitherto? The missionary institution, from the great amount of preparatory work which is already accomplished, it may be hoped, will reclaim three times as many during the next generation as it did the last. They will then have one hundred thousand. The heathen institution of slavery in this country will yield an increase of three millions during the same time!

And why may we not confidently expect the institution of slavery to continue and flourish, while our most influential religious organi-

* In the Slave States of this country it is claimed that there are many thousands of slaves who have been hopefully converted to God. Without undertaking to say that these supposed conversions are spurious, we do say, on the testimony of those well qualified to form a correct opinion in the premises, that the religion of a large portion of the degraded slaves consists chiefly in superstition, fanatical practices, and an obsequious servility to the tyrant that rules them.

zations countenance and sustain it? And why may we not expect our missionary Boards will continue to sustain slavery, as long as they can continue to unite the affections and contributions of both the friends and enemies of oppression? Experience abundantly proves, that all the light of the day in which we live, and the prayers and memorials of numerous petitioners, made year after year, and the darkness and spiritual death of increasing millions in our own borders, are not sufficient to move them to a disconnection. There is but one remedy left, so far as human instrumentality is concerned. That remedy is in the prayers and offerings of those who are at heart opposed to all oppression, and who would act consistently in their efforts to resist it. Oppression, more than any other one thing, has made the immense amount of work for the missionary abroad, and it is a strange inconsistency that the friends and supporters of missions, should be the patrons and sustainers of oppression at home or elsewhere. There are many indications that idolatry, as an institution, has waxed old, and is ready to vanish away. Satan has found oppression a better instrument in his hands to accomplish his purposes, inasmuch as the crushing of the intellectual faculties is a more hopeless and remediless injury than all the superstitious practices of idolatry; and the pride, and interest, and ambition of mankind, can be united in sustaining and perpetuating the former system.

The heathen people of this country, and the position of the Church towards them, form an anomaly in the history of the world. With a just claim to all the rights of citizens, and under a government acknowledging equal rights in all, they are stript of every right. At a time when the gospel is acknowledged to be justly due to the world, and efforts are made to dispense it to others, they are passed by on the other side. With a valid claim upon the country for justice, and as valid a claim as other heathen can plead for the gospel, they do not receive either. Between these two claims, which will stand good at the bar of heaven, they get not the crumbs that fall from the tables of plenty around. They famish in a Christian land for want of the bread of life. But it is not our purpose here to ask, that that bread should be given them—only that Christians should turn away from sustaining

and strengthening the chains that bind them, as they carry forward their charities and blessings to comfort and save others. And is this too much to ask or to hope? Will not the Lord, without whom we can do nothing, bless more abundantly our labors among heathen everywhere, when we go to the work consistently, with our hands washed from the stain and contamination of oppression? There is nothing too hard for God. With consistent prayers and efforts, and his blessing, even the ruinous effects of oppression, and oppression itself, would probably very soon be known only in the history of the past.

It is gratifying and encouraging to see in almost every denomination of Christians in the land, channels of communication opening to foreign heathen nations, disconnected from our system of domestic oppression. It is a triumph of truth, and of principle, and of conscience, which is an earnest of future good to the world. To walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless, is to secure the smiles and benediction of heaven. The approbation and assistance of our heavenly Father, will avail more than the smiles and patronage of the mighty who regard not his law. Necessity is no longer imposed upon any, either to withhold his missionary contribution, or to bestow it in such way as to sustain an institution of oppression, of heathenism, and of wretchedness at home. Many have long deplored the want of a channel of communication for missionary offerings, free from the contact and contamination of slavery. Such a channel the Union Missionary Society,* located in

* The *Union Missionary Society* is located in the city of New York. Its object is to evangelize those portions of the globe, which are most destitute of the gospel. No slaveholder is allowed to be a member of the Society, nor are the avails of slave-labor knowingly received into its treasury.

The following persons compose the Executive Committee: Christopher Rush, Arthur Tappan, Theodore S. Wright, S. S. Jocelyn, Charles B. Ray, George Ho-garth, William E. Whiting, S. E. Cornish, Josiah Brewer, Ichabod Coddington, Amos G. Beman, J. W. C. Pennington, Daniel A. Payne, Austin F. Williams, Henry H. Gannet, Anthony Lane, and Lewis Tappan.

Donations in money, or useful articles, will be thankfully received by Lewis Tappan, Treasurer: He will also receive donations for other anti-slavery associations, and transmit the same to the treasurers thereof.

A vessel will soon sail for the Sandwich Islands, which will afford a favorable

the city of New York, now offers to Christians who feel it a duty to send the gospel abroad unstained by the offerings of robbery. Similar institutions exist in the Free Will and Calvinistic Baptist and true Wesleyan Methodist denominations. To these may be added a recent missionary organization at Oberlin, Ohio, called the Western Evangelical Missionary Society. In the last few months this infant institution has sent forth eighteen or twenty missionaries to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Missionaries of acknowledged capacity, efficiency, and faithfulness are now upon the missionary field, and are dependent upon their exertions, day by day, for a support for themselves and families. The Rev. L. Andrews and Rev. J. S. Green have been laboring at the Sandwich Islands more than fifteen years. They still wish to continue their missionary labors there. They left the service of the American Board in 1842, on account, among other reasons, of that Board's connection with slavery. There are also several missionaries in Jamaica, who went from this country to labor among the emancipated people there, and who are also dependent upon their own exertions for support.

The Mendi mission is under the care of the Union Missionary Society, whose Executive Committee have voted that the Rev. Mr. Raymond and wife, with an assistant female missionary, go, in a short time, to resume their labors in Africa. Shall those who have long since gone abroad, or those who are now about to embark be left destitute, because of their conscientious refusal of patronage which is stained with the blood of slavery? It is for those who are, not in word only, but in deed and in truth, opposed to oppression, to decide this question. They who wish for the perpetua-

opportunity for sending any articles that may be forwarded to Messrs. Andrews and Green; and opportunities frequently occur to forward supplies to the missionaries at Jamaica.

Donations for Mr. and Mrs. Raymond, who expect to sail for Sierra Leone in a few days, to establish a mission to Kaw-mendi, about forty miles from the coast, and from eighty to one hundred miles south of Sierra Leone, will also be received. And the friends of the Mendi Mission are earnestly invited to sustain it by their offerings and prayers.

tion of slavery, or who regard it with comparative indifference, cannot be expected to sustain anti-slavery missionaries. There is no want of channels that harmonize with their views. Let those, then, who regard oppression in some sense as God regards it,* and who see it to be the great obstruction to the spread of the gospel, and the conversion of the Gentiles, come with their prayers and offerings, in such way that there may be no hindrance to the blessing of the Lord. With consistent efforts on this subject, is it too much to hope that the millions of oppressed heathen in our own land may be freed in a few years, and their untrammelled minds unite with the emancipated elsewhere, in songs of praise to God? Is it too much to believe, that this great stumbling block being taken out of the way, the chariot wheels of the gospel would roll forward, to something more like triumphant success? May Christians everywhere arouse to a sense of duty on the subject, and may the Lord hasten the time, when all those who conduct missionary operations, and those who carry the glad tidings of the gospel to heathen lands, shall be free from the guilt of holding their fellow-men in bondage, or advocating slavery, or fellowshiping as Christians those who, under any pretence, are connected with this soul-destroying system.

* “ So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun : and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter ; and on the side of their oppressors there was power ; but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.”—Ecclesiastes ch. iv. 1, 2.

“ Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong ; that useth his neighbor’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.”—Jeremiah xxii. 13.

